Chapter 8
From Practical Consciousness to Psychoanalytic Theory

8.1 The practical consciousness of the commodity producer

At the moment they work for others and at the moment they consume the use-values produced by others, that is, in the very materiality of their process of social metabolism as human beings, commodity producers immediately see themselves as what they are, namely, people lacking any personal relationship with others. The only relationship that is manifested in this immediacy is the material relationship that their persons establish with things as use-values. At the same time, their general social relationship, that is, the way in which they organize the materiality of their social metabolism process, presents itself to them as external to their own persons, as a power belonging to the things themselves, which automatically imposes itself upon them through the relationship that these things establish among themselves.

Since the producer of commodities is a free individual who at the same time is subject to the social power of the product of his labor, there is no way for his immediate practical experience to make it evident to him that that which subjugates him and has the attribute of relating him socially is the product of his own action as a free individual. Such a contradiction could only appear to him as absurd, if he could even conceive it. Therefore, he can only think that the attribute that things have as commodities cannot arise from his own action as a free individual. It must lie in the nature of those things themselves. It must be an attribute of the things that has been placed in them, not by his own action as a free individual, but by nature, just as things have weight, color, density, etc. His commodity confronts him as a fetish, that is, as an inanimate object to which the person attributes certain powers over himself, as if these arose from the nature of the object and not from the voluntary action of the individual who made it a fetish.

The consciousness and will of the free individual, that is, the thought process that recognizes its own determination as the organizer of the subject's participation in the process of social metabolism, thus carry the fetishistic inversion as the negation itself of their own content. In other words, the consciousness and will of the free individual have, as an essential moment intrinsic to them, a thought process that imposes itself behind the back of objective knowledge of their own determinations and that, as such, triggers the subject's action as the negation itself of their objective will.

It is already quite enough for the commodity producer to have to see himself and act as an absolutely independent individual, in order to make it so that from this action his social interdependence arises. He has to act as a social subject, as if this action were an absolute attribute of his independence. But he can only be certain that he has acted as a social subject when the result of this seemingly independent action comes into contact, for better or worse, with the no less apparently independent will of others. Thus, in order to avoid the useless expenditure of his individual share of social labor power to produce value, the commodity producer must direct his individual work by applying his five senses as a free individual to

anticipating the decisions of others' wills. His apparent absolute independence, from which he cannot detach himself in order to act as a social subject, is presented to him in this way, clashing within his own consciousness with submission to the arbitrariness of others.

Just as it seems to him that commodities are interchangeable as equivalents by nature, the commodity producer sees himself as a naturally free individual. But the exercise of his natural individual freedom presents itself to him as having an external limit to his person, namely, the disposition by others of their own free individualities. As the saying goes, one's freedom ends where another's begins. Thus, his social interdependence presents itself to his individual, independent consciousness, which must bear that interdependence as the question of his 'ought-to-be' as a free individual equal to others. This ought-to-be must appear as an inherent attribute of the free individual personality. At the same time, it must appear as an attribute externally inherent in the exercise of the free individual personality. The rights and obligations of the free individual are nothing other than this contradiction resolved, in the eyes of the consciousness alienated in the commodity that stops at the appearance of being an abstractly free consciousness. His social being presents itself to him as emerging from an abstract condition of being a free individual who relates externally to other free individuals, insofar as each of them is the natural bearer of equal rights and obligations.

First of all, in a practical way, this concrete determination of the social being of the commodity producer takes the form of the moral ought of the free individual, of their moral conscience. But as is inherent to it for being the concrete form of a social relation that is established externally to individuals through things, moral conscience itself needs to present itself as an objective external existence, as a thing. Thus, it presents itself as "morality." The consciousness of the commodity producer takes another step in its alienation, turning this appearance of its social being into a theoretical conception of the very natural character of the moral ought of the free individual that determines their social being, that is, into philosophy. The moral ought thus appears naturalized as ethics. And since social interdependence is realized through the apparent affirmation of each one as an abstractly free individual, the ideological inversion is completed with the appearance that the very condition of being a free individual stems from the realization of that natural existence in itself which — it is postulated — is ethics.

It is clear that, as soon as this concrete form of alienated consciousness is not sufficient for the individual to realize the determinations of their social interdependence through their personal independence — that is, if they deviate from their moral duty in a way that transcends the established social unit indirectly — their social interdependence presents itself to them in a concrete form, whose character, external to their free individuality, is much more forceful: justice, which administers law as a directly social authority.[1] Since they have not behaved in accordance with the moral duty of a free individual, justice materially deprives them of their freedom, not to punish them for their failing, it is said, but until they are rehabilitated in their natural condition as a free individual, learning to behave as such. All of this, of course, subject to the fact that, in a society where the general social relationship takes the form of a thing that

[1] Later we will see the specific way in which free individuals establish this direct relationship with each other.

can be carried in your pocket, everything is bought and sold, starting with morality and justice.

Liberty, equality, morality, ethics, and justice are not natural emanations of the 'human spirit.' They are concrete forms of the general social relationship, historically specific, of commodity producers. Marx summarizes it in the following terms:

> Equality and freedom are not only respected in this way in the exchange based on exchange values, but the exchange of exchange values is the real productive foundation of all equality and freedom. As pure ideas, equality and freedom are mere idealized expressions of that foundation; developed in legal, political, and social relationships, they are only that foundation raised to another power.[2]

The inherent contradiction in his social being as a producer of commodities—that is, his full freedom regarding the individual character of his labor and his absolute lack of freedom regarding the social character of his labor—takes shape within his consciousness and will as a constantly renewed contradiction that appears to him as a tear in his very personality as a free individual. He does not know how to act except by making his apparent absolute independence clash, within his own consciousness and will, with his no less absolute apparent external dependence.

The private execution of social labor carries with it the waste of social labor power that is expended in concrete forms, which later manifest as socially useless. But it also entails the enormous waste of social labor power due to the exertion of vital energy, caused by the fact that consciousness and will must govern every action of the individual as a social subject through the specific clash in question.

8.2 The scientific consciousness of the commodity producer that starts from naturalizing their freedom

Let us move from the common consciousness of the commodity producer to their scientific consciousness. Science is the form of knowledge that penetrates the immediate appearances presented to common consciousness in order to understand the determinations of one's own actions, that is, one's own determinations as a subject, in their objective materiality. As such, it is the form of consciousness that gives the individual greater control over the productive powers of their labor. Therefore, it is the fullest form of free consciousness and will. Conversely, scientific consciousness can only be immediately developed as such by individuals who possess mastery over their own consciousnesses and wills, that is, by free individuals. It is no coincidence that the incipient development of science in societies dominated by personal relations of subordination was subsumed within the production of religious consciousness, that

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[2] Karl Marx, Grundrisse of the Critique of Political Economy (Draft) 1857-1858, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953, p. 156, own translation. It should be noted that both the translation by Scaron published by Siglo XXI and that by Roces published by Fondo de Cultura Económica introduce a 'and,' nonexistent in the original, between 'legal, political relations' and 'social,' which makes the first two appear as if they were alternatives opposed to their own kind of social relations.

is, of conceptions that naturalize these relations by transforming them into fantastic determinations devoid of objective coherence.

It might seem that the fetishism of commodities would collapse as soon as it came under the scrutiny of scientific knowledge. But the matter is far from being so simple. For the commodity producer, science naturally appears as a theoretical representation, a representation of the concrete constructed according to an objective ideal necessity, a logic. And logic tells him that every concrete existence must be represented scientifically as a simple immediate affirmation: what is, is. Therefore, the idea that his free consciousness is the way his alienated consciousness manifests itself appears to the commodity producer as logically absurd. Free consciousness is free consciousness and alienated consciousness is alienated consciousness. At most, if one considers using a materialist dialectical logic, one can conceive of these two consciousnesses as two poles that assert themselves in a mutually exclusive manner, in an irreducible relationship of mutual antagonism. But just as in this case the concrete consciousness of the producer can be conceived as the struggle between his free consciousness and his alienated consciousness, free consciousness continues to be conceived as something external to alienated consciousness and vice versa. Once again, it is logically inconceivable that free consciousness is the concrete form of the existence of alienated consciousness.[3]

8.3 Psychoanalytic Theory

8.3.1 Freud

Based on the method in question, the science aimed at the theoretical representation of the consciousness of the commodity producer, psychoanalytic theory, conceives the specific determinations of that consciousness as if they were inherent to the nature of the human mind. The immediate appearance of absolute individual independence opens the way, conceived as a primary psychic instance. It is represented inverted in the form of an abstract, absolute natural independence that points to the reproduction of free individuality, empty of any social being, namely, the id. In Freud's words:[4]

> The oldest of these psychic provinces or instances we call the id; it contains everything that is inherited, innate, constitutionally established, that is to say, above all, the instincts originating in the somatic organization, which attain (in the id) a first psychic expression. [...] The power of the id expresses the true life purpose of the individual

[3] I have developed the issue of the scientific method as a necessary form of free consciousness carrying alienation in Juan Iñigo Carrera, *El capital: historical reason, revolutionary subject, and consciousness*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Imago Mundi, 2013, chap. 7.

[4] Luis López Ballesteros, translator of Freud's Complete Works published by Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, which will be cited, translates the German word «Trieb» as 'instinct'. He agrees on this term with The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud carried out by James Strachey. In contrast, Jose L. Etcheverry, translator of the Complete Works published by Amorrortu editors, uses the term 'drive', which has been endorsed by Lacan. As will be seen, any specific distinction that might exist between 'drive' and 'instinct' is irrelevant to the issue at stake here.

organism: to satisfy its innate needs.[5]

> We give these physical needs, insofar as they represent stimuli of psychic activity, the name of instincts. Such instincts fill the id, and it can be stated synthetically that all the energy of the id comes from them. [...] What do instincts demand? Satisfaction; that is, the creation of situations in which somatic needs can be appeased. [...] Here speaks a domain of the pleasure principle. [...] The instincts of the id tend toward a blind and immediate satisfaction,...[6]

The degree of naturalization is such that the appearance of immediate independence of the commodity producers, who take their historically specific general social relationship as individuals lacking direct personal ties, is represented as if it were the expression of an abstract animality, an abstract instinct or drive.[7]

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[5] Sigmund Freud, Compendium of Psychoanalysis, In: Complete Works. Vol. 3, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Publishing, 1973, pp. 3380-3381.

[6] Sigmund Freud, Lay Analysis (Psychoanalysis and Medicine), In: Complete Works, vol. 3, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Publishing. 1973, p. 2921

[7] The temporal limitation of individual life and the continuity of the life of the species in its reproduction from one generation of individuals to another are the most concrete and powerful form of developing the living subject's ability to appropriate their environment. Human beings are distinguished as a genus from animal species by the way this development is directed through the transformation of the environment into a medium produced for human life by labor. Therefore, this generic human being is an attribute carried within the productive subjectivity of each individual, but it is not an abstract attribute of that subjectivity; rather, it is an attribute of the social character of labor. And, regarding the specific issue at hand here, it is the social character of labor as a projection of productive potentials from one generation to another. But when consciousness, imprisoned by the appearances of commodity production, begins to naturalize the appearance of the individually abstractly free person, the very necessity of individuality, temporally limited as a bearer of the development of generic potentials, presents itself as just another abstract instinctive determination, inherent to the individual personality. Thus, psychoanalytic theory takes this appearance, representing on one hand the social necessity of transformative development carried within individual subjectivity, as an abstract 'life instinct.' On the other hand, it represents the negation of that transformative capacity when it is borne by an individual whose social productive potentials have been mutilated, as a 'death instinct' (Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, In: Complete Works, vol. 3, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, pp. 2507–2541).
Shortly afterwards, Freud repeats the same approach in a concise manner:

> Based on theoretical reflections, supported by Biology, we assumed the existence of a death instinct, whose mission is to return all animated organic matter to the inanimate state, in opposition to Eros, whose aim is to complicate life and thus preserve it, through an ever-broader synthesis of living substance, divided into particles. Both instincts act in a strictly conservative manner, tending toward the reconstitution of a state disturbed by the genesis of life; a genesis that would be the cause both of the continuation of life and of the tendency toward death. In turn, life would be a struggle and a transaction between both tendencies (Sigmund Freud, The "I" and the "It," In: Complete Works, vol. 3, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, p. 2717).

With the conception of the id, the apparent absolute independence of the commodity producer has been represented as if it were the basic natural instance, devoid of any social being, of the human psyche. Then comes the moment to incorporate into the representation the naturalization of social interdependence under the proper appearance of commodity production. Above all, this interdependence must enter as a force originally alien to the human subject, which must impose itself over their abstract natural individual independence. But, at

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It is remarkable how, in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud crudely reverses the inherent need of the living subject to develop their potentials to appropriate the environment, as if it were a circumstance violently imposed on the living subject from the outside. This only reflects the appearance characteristic of the commodity producer, insofar as the productive forces of their social labor present themselves as powers beyond their control, imposed from outside with the violence that submitting to them is a condition for the reproduction of their seemingly independent individual life process:

> If, therefore, all organic instincts are conservative and historically acquired, and tend toward regression or a reconstruction of the past, we must attribute all the successes of organic evolution to external, disruptive, and diverting influences. The elementary animated being would not have wished to transform itself from its beginning and would always have repeated, under identical conditions, one and the same vital path. But ultimately there is always the evolutionary history of our Earth and its relationship to the Sun, which has left its mark on the evolution of organisms. Conservative organic instincts have received each of these forced transformations of the life course, preserving them for repetition, and thus have to produce the deceptive impression of forces that tend toward transformation and progress, whereas in reality they aim only to reach an ancient end by paths both old and new. This ultimate end of all organic tendency could also be indicated. That the end of life would be a state never previously attained would be in contradiction with Nature, the preserver of instincts. This end must rather be an ancient state, a starting state, which the animated once left and toward which it tends through all the detours of evolution. If, as experience shows, without any exception, we must accept that all living things die due to internal foundations, returning to the inorganic, we can say: the goal of all life is death (Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, op. cit., pp. 2525-2526).

In contrast, Marx begins by discovering individual life as the concrete form of generic life, as well as the inversion this determination undergoes due to the alienation of labor:

> Man makes his very vital activity the object of his will and his consciousness. He has conscious vital activity [...]. Conscious vital activity immediately distinguishes man from animal vital activity. Precisely, and only for that reason, he is a generic being. Or, in other words, he is only a conscious being, that is, his own life is only an object for him, because he is a generic being. Only for that reason is his activity free. Alienated labor inverts the relationship, so that man, precisely because he is a conscious being, makes his vital activity, his essence, a mere means for his existence [... for his physical existence.]
> ... The individual is a social being. His vital exteriorization [...] is thus an exteriorization and affirmation of social life. Individual life and the generic life of man are not distinct,
> ... Death seems to be a harsh victory of the species over the individual and contradicts the unity of both; but the determined individual is only a determined generic being and, as such, mortal (Karl Marx, Manuscripts: Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1968, pp. 111-113 and 146-147).

the same time, this social interdependence needs to appear embodied in the individual's own subjectivity. It is no coincidence that the free consciousness of the commodity producer is the concrete form of their alienated consciousness. Psychoanalytic theory represents the determination in question as the development of a portion of that purely individual being, namely, the id, into a second psychic instance. This second instance is then conceived as the affirmation of purely independent individuality, which at the same time is conditioned by carrying within itself the affirmation of social interdependence as an external imposition, which it must satisfy in order to satisfy itself. It is, therefore, an instance presented as the bearer of the necessarily contradictory consciousness and will of the commodity producer, as if it were an inherent attribute of human subjectivity itself, namely, the ego:

> We know that the pleasure principle corresponds to a primary functioning of the psychic apparatus and that it is useless, and even highly dangerous, for the organism's self-assertion in the face of the difficulties of the external world. Under the influence of the instinct of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principle, which, without abandoning the goal of ultimately attaining pleasure, requires and achieves the postponement of satisfaction and the renunciation of some of the possibilities of attaining it, and forces us to patiently endure displeasure during the long detour necessary to reach pleasure.[8]
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> When the instinctual aspirations of the id do not find satisfaction, intolerable states arise. Experience quickly shows that such situations of satisfaction can only be achieved with the help of the external world, and then the part of the id turned toward that external world comes into play, that is, the ego. ... The instincts of the id aim for blind and immediate satisfaction; but on their own, they would never achieve it, instead creating opportunities for serious harm. It is the ego's role to prevent such failure, acting as a mediator between the demands of the id and those of the real external world .... By thus taming the impulses of the id, it replaces the pleasure principle, which previously dominated alone, with the so-called reality principle, which, although it pursues the same goals, does so by taking into account the conditions imposed by the external world.[9]
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> It is easily seen that the ego is a part of the Id modified by the influence of the external world, [...] The ego strives in turn to convey to the Id this influence of the external world and aims to replace the pleasure principle, which reigns unchecked in the Id, with the reality principle. Perception is to the ego what instinct is to the Id. The ego represents what we might call reason or reflection, in opposition to the Id, which contains the passions.[10]

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[8] Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, op. cit., p. 2509.

[9] Freud, Lay Analysts (Psychoanalysis and Medicine)1 op. cit., p. 2921.

[10] Freud, The 'ego' and the 'id', op. cit., p. 2708.

Once psychoanalytic theory has inverted the social being by conceiving it as external limits to the abstract natural freedom that are carried within individual subjectivity itself, it needs to conceive the way in which the transition occurs from that initial abstract exteriority to the interiority of the self. It would then seem that even its own inversions would force it to confront the concrete form in which the general social interdependence presents itself to the commodity producer, that is, the commodity as the bearer of the powers of social labor. But, as corresponds to its condition as a logical representation, for psychoanalytic theory, consciousness is consciousness and the commodity is the commodity. Thus, it is powerless to see in the commodity the objectified form taken by the general social relation alienated from immediately free individuals. The social interdependence of these individuals must be removed from the commodity and represented as opposed to its true content. Psychoanalytic theory then represents it as a determination imposed externally on individuals through the direct relationships they actually establish with each other as personifications of their commodities, set up as if they were abstract direct relations between people. The general social relationship through things is thus represented as its opposite, namely, as a direct relationship between people, in which abstract individual freedom is externally curtailed by the domination that other individuals impose on it. But another step in the inversion is still missing. Commodity producers are not subject to relations of personal dependence because they are subject to their objectified social relation. For this reason, their free consciousness is the concrete form of their consciousness alienated in the commodity. Therefore, their alienation is not carried in the person of other producers, but in the free consciousness of each individual. Consequently, the psychoanalytic representation must now transform the apparent dependence exerted externally by other people into the very condition of the individual's free consciousness. The apparent external dependence on others is now represented as internalized, as a social "ought" that the individual has introduced into themselves from the outside to detach it from all personal subordination, namely, the superego.

> Already in these older renunciations to instinct, a psychological factor intervenes, which also plays a very important role in all subsequent ones.... One of the characteristics of our evolution consists in the gradual transformation of external coercion into internal coercion through the action of a special psychic instance of man, the superego, which gradually incorporates external coercion among its commandments. In every child, we can observe the process of this transformation, which is what makes him a moral and social being.[11]
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> You will guess that the superego is the foundation of that phenomenon we call moral conscience. For mental health, it is very important that the superego is normally developed; that is, that it has become sufficiently impersonal, which is precisely not the case in the neurotic, whose Oedipus complex has not undergone the necessary transformation.[12]

[11] Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, In: Complete Works, vol. 3 Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, p. 2965

[12] Freud, Secular Analysis (Psychoanalysis and Medicine), op. cit., p. 2936.

Psychoanalytic theory has already conceived as generically inherent to human subjectivity, on the one hand, the appearance of being free from the commodity producer, and on the other hand, the appearance of its social interdependence as a power external to it that, nevertheless, this same producer carries within himself in his condition as a free individual. In this naturalization, conscious and voluntary action has been represented as the mediation of the ego in the ongoing struggle between supposed abstract natural freedom, represented by the id, and the supposed social interdependence external to the individual being but which he carries within himself, represented by the superego. The contradiction inherent in free consciousness, which faces the product of its own action as an external power that not only escapes its control but also controls it, is thus represented as a determination inherent to human subjectivity under the name of "anxiety":

> The poor ego appears even more troubled: it serves three harsh masters and strives to reconcile their demands and commands. These demands always differ, and sometimes seem irreconcilable; it is therefore no wonder that the ego so often fails in its task. Its three masters are the external world, the superego, and the id. If we consider the efforts of the ego to please them at the same time—or, better said, to obey them simultaneously—we will no longer regret having personified it and presented it as a separate being. It feels besieged from three sides and threatened by three dangers to which, under extreme pressure, it responds with the development of anxiety... In this way, driven by the id, restricted by the superego, and opposed by reality, the ego struggles to carry out its economic mission, that of establishing harmony between the forces and influences acting within it and upon it; and we understand why, at times, we cannot help exclaiming: 'How difficult life is!' When the ego has to acknowledge its weakness, it becomes overwhelmed by anxiety—real anxiety before the external world, moral anxiety before the superego, and neurotic anxiety before the force of the passions within the id.[13]

In a superimposed construction, Freud represents the unity of the thought process with which the commodity producer governs the exercise of their general social relation, that is, their consciousness, as if it were naturally split into two domains. This split is maintained through the inversion of the relationship between consciousness and will. The latter ceases to be the form in which action governed by the former is realized, and comes to be conceived as that which curtails the very existence of consciousness. On the one hand, only the process of appropriating the potential of one's own action is recognized as consciousness insofar as this process appears to be governed by a will of the subject abstracted from all alienation. On the other hand, insofar as the very process of organizing one's own action confronts the subject as the bearer of a potential that escapes their control and dominates them, it is represented as the abstract negation of consciousness, that is, as the unconscious:

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[13] S1gmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, In: Complete Works, vol. 3, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, pp. 3144-3145.

> It is well known that a large number of people argue, against the claim of absolute psychic determinism, that they have an intense feeling of conviction in the existence of free will... After our analyses, there is no need to dispute the right to the feeling of conviction in the existence of free will. If we distinguish conscious motivation from unconscious motivation, this conscious feeling of conviction does not extend to all our motor decisions... But what is thus free on this side receives its motivation from the other side, from the unconscious; and in this way, determination in the psychic realm is achieved without any interruption.[14]

Then, Freud brings both constructions together through the representation of how the unity of the free consciousness that carries alienation operates, its dynamics, as if it governed the subject's actions based on the cleavage of these two constituent domains. On one hand, the unconscious represents the determinations that appear to the subject as their own powers, which at the same time are alien to them and escape their free control; on the other hand, the conscious represents the determinations that present themselves to the subject as powers that they freely control by understanding their necessity, through which flows the resolution between the abstract absolute natural independence and the abstract internalized social interdependence carried by the instances of the id, the ego, and the superego:

> Everything that happens in the id is and remains unconscious, and only the processes developed in the ego can become conscious. But not all of them, not always or necessarily, since very significant parts of the ego can remain unconscious for a long time.[15]
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> The story of the genesis of the superego shows us that the old conflicts of the ego, with the object-charges of the Id, can continue being transformed into conflicts with the superego, heir of the Id... the extensive communication of the ego ideal with unconscious instinctual feelings explains to us the enigma of how the ideal can remain largely unconscious and inaccessible to the ego.[16]
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> Yes; considerable parts of the ego and the superego can remain unconscious and normally are. This means that the subject knows nothing about their contents, and a strenuous effort is needed to make them conscious. It is true, indeed, that the ego and the conscious, the repressed and the unconscious do not coincide.[17]

Thus, the commodity producer leaves the psychoanalytic consultation scientifically convinced that his behavior is necessarily contradictory as a result of his full social interdependence being realized through his full personal independence—that is, that his free consciousness is the concrete form in which his alienated consciousness is realized—is a condition as natural as to fit into the pathology-therapy scheme, just like a broken bone or the

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[14] Sigmund Freud. Psychopathology of Everyday Life, In Complete Works, vol. 1. Mądrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, pp. 915-916.

[15] Freud, Profane Analysis (Psychoanalysis and Medicine), op. cit., p. 2920.

[16] Freud. The 'ego' and the 'id', op. cit., p. 2716.

[17] Freud. New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op. cit., p. 3140.

flu.[18]

[18] This does not take away from the fact that psychoanalytic therapy has a remarkable effect on the way the interested party regulates their actions. Not because it advances the overcoming of the alienated character of consciousness by confronting it with its true determination, but because it operates by reproducing the alienation itself through the purely unconscious process of transference:

> The factor that determines the outcome is no longer the patient's intellectual introspection, a faculty that lacks sufficient energy and freedom for this purpose, but solely their attitude toward the doctor. If their transference is positive, it will endow the doctor with great authority, and the patient will regard their instructions and opinions as worthy of belief. On the other hand, those patients in whom this is absent or whose transference is negative pay no attention to the doctor at all. Belief in the therapist here reproduces the very history of the patient's development.... In this way, it turns out that a person is generally not accessible through their intellectual side, but in proportion to their capacity for libidinal investment in objects (Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, In: Complete Works, vol. 2, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, p. 2400).

The change in the way the subject of analysis governs their actions is the result of their own actions. However, the content of this change is nothing other than the ability to act as a social subject with less expenditure of vital energy and a greater application of it to the performance of social labor. Thus, to the individual themselves, it can only be presented as a change, not in their own apparent nature as an absolutely free individual, but from the point of reference of their apparent external social interdependence. Appearances that the conscious process of psychoanalysis itself has confirmed to them as objective realities. Therefore, the act of changing the way they govern their actions appears to both themselves and their therapist as if it had emerged from unconsciously changing the external figure in which social interdependence was personified: from the reference that seemed to limit the exercise of abstract individual freedom so that an appropriate social interdependence could arise from it, it has been transferred to the liberating figure of the therapist.

In its essence, we are here facing the same process of reproduction of free consciousness carrying alienation in commodities that occurs in hypnosis, suggestion, the laying on of hands, modern worship of images, fetishes, and amulets, and, above all, in the religious worship of deities (we will have an opportunity to pause on the latter later). The subject can only give course to what is nothing other than their own action, on the condition that it presents itself as the power of an existence external to them, a person or thing, to whose dominion they are subjected. The specificity of psychoanalysis is that this unconscious process is borne in its opposite, in the process of producing an objective consciousness regarding one's own determinations, carried out by the subject. That is why the mode of the process in question is particularly characteristic of individuals whose concrete work lies in the exercise of objective consciousness, that is, of those who engage in what is called intellectual work, as opposed to other forms that operate through the negation of the mediation of objective consciousness. This also explains the need for the strong determination of psychoanalytic theory as a bearer of ideology, since it must counteract its own impetus toward the development of the objective consciousness of the subject with whom it operates, lest it go too far and this consciousness ends up discovering its determination as alienated. Nevertheless, the specificity of psychoanalysis as a form of producing free consciousness blindly carrying its alienation even transcends its determination by the aforementioned materiality of labor. The fullness of its specific power develops with respect to the individual bearing the productive attributes in question who, due to the conditions presented to them transcending their individuality, confronts the exacerbated

Psychoanalytic theory has not needed to go beyond the appearances characteristic of the common consciousness of the commodity producer to conceive of abstract absolute independence as the natural starting point of human subjectivity. But how can a process of objective knowledge make the apparent form in which the commodity producer perceives their social interdependence also acquire an ahistorical character? Only in the one possible way, that is, through the annihilation of its own objectivity by resorting to myth. The moral superego—that is, social interdependence conceived as internalized by individuals following an external imposition on their natural independence—would have arisen as a reciprocal restraint as a consequence of the supposed murder of the father of the primitive horde, carried out by the other males of the same, that is, by their sons:

> The expelled brothers gathered one day, killed the father and devoured his corpse, thus putting an end to the existence of the paternal horde. United. they undertook and carried out what individually would have been impossible for them .... Totemic food, perhaps the first pot of Humanity. It would be the commemorative reproduction of this criminal and memorable act that constituted the starting point of social organizations, moral restrictions and religion. To find these consequences plausible by abstracting from their premises, it is enough to admit that the rebellious fraternal horde harbored with regard to the father those same contradictory feelings which form the ambivalent content of the paternal completion in our children and in our neurotic patients. They hated the father who so violently opposed their need for power and his sexual demands, but at the same time they loved and admired him. After having suppressed him and satisfied their hatred and their desire to identify with him, the affectionate feelings, previously violently dominated by the hostile, had to impose themselves on them. As a result of this affective process, remorse arose and the consciousness of guilt was born, here confused with it, and the dead father acquired a much greater power than he had possessed in life, all circumstances that we still see today in human destiny. What the father had previously prevented, by the very fact of his existence, the children later forbade to themselves by virtue of that "retrospective obedience" characteristic of a psychic situation that psychoanalysis has made familiar to us.[19]

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contradiction between the development of their freedom insofar as they understand their determinations and the way these appear imposed from outside themselves as conditions that mutilate the exercise of their seemingly enhanced individual freedom. Thus, the specificity of psychoanalysis becomes particularly evident with respect to the petty bourgeoisie, which is overwhelmed by the advance of capital accumulation, as well as with respect to salaried workers who, having been trained for intellectual work, find themselves in an environment where the corresponding jobs do not exist. It is therefore not surprising that it is displaced by 'alternative therapies,' or 'new age' fantasies, and, at times, by the harshness of psychopharmacological treatments, whenever crises of the capitalist mode of production arise, sweeping away any possibility of rationality for the alienated consciousness that insists on seeing itself as abstractly free.

[19] Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, In: Complete Works, vol. I, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, pp. 1838-1839.

Thus, the development of "culture," that is, the development of the process of social metabolism specifically human based on the transformation of the environment through labor, is represented as the product of the development of the superego in its effort to assert itself over the natural individual autonomy of the id.:

> But also, because each individual is virtually an enemy of civilization, despite having to acknowledge its general human interest. Indeed, the singular fact occurs that men, although it is impossible for them to exist in isolation, feel the sacrifices that civilization imposes to make communal life possible as an intolerable burden. Thus, culture must be defended against the individual, and all its commandments, organizations, and institutions respond to this defense, which are not only intended to carry out a particular distribution of natural goods but also to maintain it and even defend the existing means for the domination of Nature and the production of goods against the hostile impulses of men.
> ... This psychological fact has a decisive significance for the judgment of human culture. At first, we might have believed that its essential function was the domination of Nature to secure vital goods and that the dangers threatening it could be avoided through an adequate distribution of these goods among men. But now we see the focus of the question shift from the material to the spiritual. The decisive point is whether it is possible to reduce, and to what extent, the sacrifices imposed on men in terms of renouncing the satisfaction of their instincts, reconcile them with those that remain necessary, and compensate them for these.
> ... Even in these earliest renunciations of instinct, a psychological factor intervenes that also gains utmost importance in all subsequent renunciations. It is inaccurate to claim that the human soul has made no progress since the most primitive times and that, in contrast to the progress of science and technology, it is today the same as at the beginning of History. We can point out here one such spiritual progress. One of the characteristics of our evolution consists in the gradual transformation of external coercion into internal coercion through the action of a special psychic faculty of man, the superego, which incorporates external coercion into its commandments. In every age we can observe the process of this transformation, which is what makes him a moral and social being. This strengthening of the superego is one of the most valuable psychological cultural factors. Those individuals in whom it has taken effect cease to be adversaries of civilization and become its most steadfast foundations. The greater their number in a cultural sector, the more secure it will be, and the sooner it can dispense with external means of coercion.[20]

The early twentieth-century Viennese petty bourgeois becomes "the man." What is the result of historical development, namely, the unnatural consciousness and will of the commodity producer, is conceived inversely as the natural cause of human history. So natural, that psychoanalytic theory ends up proclaiming the impossibility of overcoming it, even if the

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[20] Freud, The Future of an Illusion, op. cit., pp. 2962-2965

very basis of private labor as a way of organizing social labor were declared to be overcome:

> The economic critique of the communist system does not concern me; it is not possible for me to investigate whether the abolition of private property is timely and appropriate; but, on the other hand, I can recognize as a vain illusion its psychological hypothesis. It is true that by abolishing private property one removes from human aggressiveness one of its instruments, undoubtedly a very strong one, but by no means the strongest of all. However, nothing will have changed as a result in the differences of power and influence that aggressiveness exploits for its purposes; nor will the essence of aggressiveness have changed.... the inexhaustible intrinsic tendencies of human nature would not cease to follow them either.[21]

8.3.2 Lacan

Within psychoanalytic theory itself, Lacan objects to the appeal to myth as a real historical origin of the form of consciousness represented as the conscious-unconscious unity.[22] He places the emergence of language in its stead. From then on, this form of consciousness has been considered as eternal as human language itself. Let us then pause to analyze the concrete determinations of language.

Let's start, once again, from the beginning. The human life process is a process of social metabolism based on labor. That is, it is a process of metabolism where the productive expenditure of a human individual's body results in the reproduction of another individual's body as a human being. This reproduction can reach its recipient both in their immediate individual subjectivity (when it involves the consumption of a means of subsistence) and in their subjectivity as a producer for others (when it involves the consumption of a means of production, W1). Therefore, it is a process of cooperation in which the productive forces that arise from it, that is, the productive forces of social labor, take shape in the individual productive subjectivities. The way in which individual productive subjectivities are coordinated as bearers of the productive forces of social labor constitutes the starting point of the social being of human individuals.

Every form of living existence has the natural need to expand its capacity to appropriate the environment in which it finds itself. The specifically human way of fulfilling this need consists of expanding the capacity to transform the environment into a means for oneself through labor; that is, it consists of the development of the productive forces of social labor embodied in individual productive subjectivities. This process, that is to say, the development of individuals' social being, is the process of human natural history.

The action in which living beings appropriate their environment has a first stage that consists of the limited expenditure of the body to appropriate the potential that whole action can have in relation to the potentiality of its environment. This action of knowing one’s own potential in relation to that of the environment, that is, the process of knowledge, is in itself the

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[21] Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents. In: Complete Works. Vol. 3, Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1973, p. 3047.

[22] Jacques Lacan, 'On Psychic Causality,' in Supplement of Writings. Barcelona: Argot, 1984, p. 96.

process of organizing action. The organization of the human labor process, and therefore of the human process of social metabolism, has its historical origin in merely animal knowledge. In the development of the productive forces of social labor, merely animal knowledge develops into human consciousness, that is, into knowledge capable of governing one's own individual labor as part of social labor because one possesses that knowledge. Individual labor governed in this way then takes the form of voluntary action.

In turn, the coordination of collective action takes concrete form in the reciprocal externalization of the social being that each person carries within their individual subjectivity. The organization of the social metabolism process thus takes concrete form in a process of reciprocal communication through which individuals coordinate their individual work within the unity of social labor, and this process is nothing more than the reciprocal externalization of the social being of the individuals communicating with each other. The process of human metabolism begins organized through simply animal relationships and, as a concrete form of these, through communication via systems of signs. But in its development as a consciously and voluntarily organized process, human labor transcends the reach of any system of signs that cannot externalize the increasingly complex connection of the potentialities of subjects and objects, which organizes joint action. The coordination of individual productive subjectivities through the externalization of their social being gradually takes concrete form as a language—that is, a system of verbal signs that carry the breadth of increasingly complex meanings with which consciousness operates. And when the complexity of conscious connection advances to the point of needing to take on an objective external existence that transcends the very moment of verbal sign emission, these develop as written signs. In summary, language is the form of social relation in which individual conscious subjectivities coordinate their action as organs of the process of social metabolism.

The overcoming of the mere non-verbal sign by a system of verbal and written signs carrying the organized thought of joint action—or, in other words, a system of signifiers carrying meanings, as they are commonly called since Saussure—is an essential leap in the development of the productive forces of social labor. But this is not a leap whose significance ends with itself. On the contrary, it extends its reach indefinitely forward, as it is the product of consciousness through which consciousness itself gives substance to its development as the capability to organize the voluntary action that transforms the environment into a medium for human life. Language is a social relationship, and its forms—that is, the very relationship between meanings and the signifiers that carry them—are historically determined ways in which the process of social metabolism is organized. Moreover, language is the necessary form of scientific thought, that is, of human knowledge of its own determinations in the objectivity of these. Therefore, it is the concrete necessary form that the general social relation would take in a society whose organization is based on the objective knowledge by each individual of their own individual determination as a concrete organ of the productive forces of social labor. That is, of a process of social metabolism where each individual subjectivity carries its social being in the form of a fully objective consciousness. To put it plainly, of a society that would be the opposite of the capitalist mode of production, where one's own social being presents itself to individuals as the attribute of a thing.

Let's see, then, how Lacan confronts the determinations of language. To begin with,

instead of seeing the emergence of language as the realization of a generically human nature that enhances the capacity to satisfy human needs, he sees it as the external negation of an abstract naturalness, which leaves that capacity lacking:

> The man is indeed possessed by the discourse of the law, and with it he is punished, in the name of that symbolic debt which he never stops paying increasingly in his neurosis. How can this capture be established, how does man enter into this law, which is foreign to him, with which, as an animal, he has nothing to do? To explain this, Freud constructs the myth of the murder of the father.[23]

The very way of expressing oneself, the 'capture,' the 'entry' into the 'law,' which is 'alien,' reveals that Lacan starts from conceiving the human being as a subject who has lost what was their natural freedom, to be subjected to a social domination imposed from outside that naturalness. As soon as the first step is taken, we already face the inversion of the determinations of discourse and, therefore, of language, which corresponds to the consciousness of the producer of commodities. Anyway, let's continue. In contrast to Freud, Lacan focuses on discourse. But he does not do so simply in a generic way, but with reference to its concrete system structure of signifiers:

> There is in man a signifier that points to his relationship with the signified, and that is called the superego.[24]

From being a historically determined social relationship, and, therefore, a product that each generation transforms by developing the productive forces of social labor, Lacan inverts language as an existence that precedes the constitution of every social relationship, which precedes a history whose future is already present in a completed manner in its very starting point:

> What I am now putting at the beginning of the analytical experience is the notion that there are already established and structured signifiers. There is already a central system built and functioning. You did not make it. This central system is language, in operation for as long as you can remember. Literally, you cannot remember any further. I am referring to the history of humanity as a whole. Since there are signifiers in operation, subjects are organized in their psyche by the very play of those signifiers.[25]

Language is the most concrete and powerful form in which the exercise of consciousness takes shape. Therefore, in the capitalist mode of production, it is the most concrete and powerful form in which the exercise of free consciousness takes shape, which is such because it carries its own alienation as an attribute of the social powers of the commodity, that is, the

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[23] Jacques Lacan, The Seminar. Book 3. Psychoses, 1955-1956, Barcelona: Paidós, 1984, p. 349.
[24] Jacques Lacan, The Seminar. Book 4. The Object Relation, 1956-1957, Barcelona: Paidos, 1994, p. 214
[25] Ibid, p. 52.

exercise of a consciousness that objectively confronts its own social powers as if they were foreign to it. Thus, within the individual subjectivity of the commodity producer, language operates in the indissoluble unity of being the vehicle for affirming the individual's control over themselves, which is, in itself, the negation of that control. Lacan takes this indissoluble unity and represents it to himself as split into two courses of language determination whose reciprocal externality is interrupted by the eruption of one into the other:

> The unconscious, according to Freud, is a chain of signifiers that somewhere (in another setting he writes) repeats and persists to interfere with the gaps offered by effective discourse and the thinking that he describes.[26]

As in Freud, on the one hand, there is no more consciousness than that which remains shaped by the assertion of an abstractly free will, which dominates the construction of "effective discourse and the thought it informs." On the other hand, the alienation that constitutes the content of free consciousness is represented as if it had its own existence, formed as the negation of that "conscious" cut out by abstractly free will. It is about the unconscious, whose "chain of signifiers" "interferes" with the exercise of the conscious. There is no other dialectic here than that which Marx calls the petty-bourgeois dialectic of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand." Thanks to it, language has gone from being a necessary concrete form of consciousness to being that which, by its very form, enables the existence of the "unconscious" in opposition to consciousness.

The consciousness of the commodity producer, which has been abstracted from its alienated content, comes to be represented as a consciousness that dominates its determinations by itself and, therefore, as a naturally free consciousness. In turn, the alienation that has been represented as the pure negation of that consciousness appears as having no way of being constitutive of that free subjectivity. It appears as if it could only have been imposed on it from the outside and, therefore, is conceived as the mutilation of naturalized free subjectivity:

> In the approach I began to take, the I appears first before the Other as that which allows the delimitation of a logical weakness, as the site of an original defect that the word

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[26] Jacques Lacan, Writings 2, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1988, p. 779. Essentially, this entire conception, which places language abstracted in itself as the determinant of the course of human life, is nothing but an idealist inversion. An inversion that becomes crudely visible in the cited paragraph, in the form that something 'is' because someone conceived it that way in thought. And, as is typical of conceptions of this kind, it is not surprising that it culminates in delirious incoherences:

> Marx, if he had not accounted for that surplus of enjoyment due to his insistence on castrating himself, if he had not turned it into surplus value, in other words, if he had not founded capitalism, would have realized that surplus value is the surplus of enjoyment. None of this, of course, prevents capitalism from having been founded by him and the function of surplus value from being completely appropriately designated in terms of its devastating consequences (Jacques Lacan, The Seminar. Book 17. The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, 1969-1970, Barcelona: Paidós, 1992, p. 113).

> carries insofar as it could respond. The I appears as subjected, as subject. I wrote this word somewhere to designate the subject insofar as it is only produced divided in discourse.[27]

Through language, Lacan situates in "the Other" the exteriority that he has conceived as the origin of the mutilation of naturally free subjectivity. As is obvious, the organization of conscious collective action takes concrete form when the meaning carried in the signifier emitted by one is recognized as such content by the other. In their condition as individual organs of the process of social metabolism, the social being of the emitter constitutes an inseparable unity with the social being of the receiver. This determination is immediately visible regarding the consciousness of individuals who coordinate their process of social metabolism through direct ties of personal dependence. There, every individual subject presents themselves carrying as an attribute that determines their condition as a person, and therefore as an attribute that is naturally their own, their interdependence with others. And insofar as these direct personal relationships take on the character of the subordination of the consciousness and will of some individuals to those of others, it becomes clear in which direction the course of meaning flows. By contrast, in the capitalist mode of production, producers of commodities appear devoid of any social being that is personally their own. Their social interdependence is presented in their apparent absolute mutual independence, so that when the necessity inherent to the unity of the social metabolism process takes concrete form in the word emitted by one, it seems that such necessity contains no more potentiality than what the other's abstractly free individual will arbitrarily assigns to it:

> Isn't this where we should look, in that which possesses us, possesses us as a subject, which is nothing other than a desire, and, moreover, is the desire of the Other, a desire by which we are alienated from the very beginning?[28]

Lacan emphasizes that he conceives of 'desire' as the expression of a will, that of the other, which asserts itself in its abstract absolute freedom:

> Desire is sketched on the margin where demand tears itself away from need: a margin that is opened by demand—whose call cannot be unconditional but must be directed to the Other—under the form of the possible gap that need can provide, due to the lack of universal satisfaction (what is commonly called: anxiety). A margin that, no matter how linear it may be, lets its vertigo appear, so long as it is not covered by the elephantine trampling of the Other's whim.[29]

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[27] Jacques Lacan, The Seminar. Book 16. From One Other to the Other, 1968-1969, Buenos Aires: Paidos, 2008, p. 73

[28] Jacques Lacan, (1973-1974), "The Non-Dupes Err" (Seminar 21), unpublished (translation by Irene M. Agoff de Ramos, technical review by Evaristo Ramos), Buenos Aires Freudian School, File no. 16, Series I, 2, part two, 1977, p. 39

[29] Lacan, Écrits 2, op. cit., "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," p. 793

Thus, it conceives the organization of social interdependence as a necessity that must be imposed externally over the apparent absolute individual freedom:

> It is this whim, however, that introduces the ghost of Omnipotence not of the subject, but of the Other where its demand is established [...], and with that ghost comes the need for its restraint by the law.[30]

As much as Lacan has been reversing the appearances presented by the social relationship among producers of commodities, based on conceiving it as a simple direct relationship between people, at this point he cannot avoid confronting the evidence that the alienated character of the relationship in question is based on an equality that transcends the individuals involved. First of all, since these are mutually free individuals, the assignment of meaning to the other's signifier becomes a back-and-forth movement that leaves the people themselves, as subjects of their relationship with each other, reduced to the condition of mere signifiers:

> The registration of the signifier is established by the fact that a signifier represents a subject for another signifier. It is the structure—dream, slip, and witty remark—of all the formations of the unconscious. And it is also what explains the original division of the subject... It is not, therefore, that this operation takes its starting point in the Other, which is what leads it to be labeled as alienation. That the Other is, for the subject, the place of its signifying cause merely explains why no subject can be the cause of itself[31]

Then, what is manifested in the social relationship that commodity-producing people establish among themselves as personifications, which has language as its concrete general form, is that their respective subjectivities cannot account for the content of necessity inherent in that relationship on their own. There is clearly something missing in those subjectivities for them to be the cause of the relationship by themselves, something that operates behind their backs and dominates them; something that has an objective existence that transcends them and determines them as such subjectivities:

> The object a is that for which the speaking being, when caught in discourse, is determined. It doesn't know at all what it determines: it is the object a; in what it is determined, it is determined as a subject, that is, it is divided as a subject, it is the prey of desire.[32]

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[30] Ibid, "Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious," p. 793

[31] Lacan, Writings 2, op. cit., «Position of the Unconscious. At the Bonneval congress resumed from 1960 in 1964», pp. 819-820

[32] Jacques Lacan, "The Knowledge of the Psychoanalyst. 1. Lectures by Jacques Lacan at Ste. Anne, 1971-1972," Sesgo 2, ENAPSI (Entity of Psychoanalytic Action), 1984, p. 83.

Consequently, the object that determines subjectivity presents itself to the interested parties, individuals free from any personal domination, with the fantastic attribute of exercising power over their own persons:

> Speech has its effects, from which is constituted what we call the phantasm, that is to say, the relationship between the object a, which is what is concentrated from the effect of discourse to cause desire, and that which condenses around it, like a fissure, and which is called the subject. It is a fissure because the object a is always between each of the signifiers and the one that follows.[33]

Even Lacan himself then comes to the evidence that, behind his 'object a,' behind that which 'is lacking' in people as subjects of their own social relationship and transcends them, the commodity appears:

> I stated - the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier. It is a definition. It can be required that a definition be correct and that teaching be rigorous [...]. It is simply about this. The surplus-enjoyment is a function of the renunciation of enjoyment due to the effect of discourse. That is what gives rise to the object a. Insofar as the market defines any object of human labor as a commodity, this object carries within itself something of surplus value. Thus, the surplus-enjoyment allows isolating the function of the object a.[34]

So, what is the content of this entire theoretical construction? What Lacan does is take the historically specific form of consciousness of the commodity producer and present it as if it were the ahistorical product of human language. Under the guise of being a critique of the naturalization of the apparent freedom of the isolated individual, Lacan produces a crude naturalization of the free consciousness that is free precisely because it is alienated in the commodity. And he has no problem reaffirming this naturalization to the point of giving it a biological character:

> How can one overcome the alienation of their work? It's as if they wanted to overcome the alienation of discourse. I see nothing to overcome this alienation except the object that bears value, what Marx called, in a singularly anticipatory homonymy of psychoanalysis, the fetish, it being understood that psychoanalysis reveals its biological meaning.[35]

Behind the mask of critical discourse, the brutally reactionary claim against any possibility of overcoming the capitalist mode of production makes its way: that human beings are condemned, for as long as their speaking eternity lasts, to confront the product of their own

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[33] Jacques Lacan, The Seminar. Book 19... or Worse, 1971-197i, Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2012.
[34] Lacan, The Seminar. Book 16. From One Other to the Other, 1968-1969, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
[35] Jacques Lacan, 'Responses to Philosophy Students,' in Other Writings, Paris: Seuil, 2000, pp. 207-208, my own translation.

social powers as something that escapes their control and, even more, dominates them. And, in Lacan's words, they would do well to resign themselves to it:

> In any case, man cannot aspire to be whole (to the 'total personality,' another premise in which modern psychotherapy goes astray), from the moment the play of displacement and condensation to which he is destined in the exercise of his functions marks his relationship with the signifier.[36]

No matter how much one turns it over, beyond its operational reach as an instrument for the less exhausting everyday reproduction of free consciousness, blindly carrying its own alienation (the so-called 'clinic'), psychoanalytic theory is an ideological construction in which the fetishistic character of the commodity is expressed. It begins by naturalizing the appearances of the consciousness of the commodity producer, to represent them, coated with a veneer of objective foundation, as the necessary basis for any organization of the human process of social metabolism.[37]

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[36] Lacan, Écrits 2, op. cit., "The Signification of the Phallus", pp. 671-672.

[37] Not for nothing does Lacan agree with Smith in resorting to language to naturalize the consciousness of the commodity producer:

> It is not our purpose, for the moment, to investigate whether this propensity [to barter, exchange, and negotiate one thing for another] is one of those innate principles in human nature, for which no further explanation can be given, or whether, as seems more probable, it is the consequence of the faculty of reason and language (Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958, p. 16).

But even more remarkable is its convergence with neoclassical economics in terms of resorting to the externality of mathematical language in order to regenerate the naturalization of the commodity producer's consciousness once the historical determination of that consciousness has been revealed by Marx. Just as for Walras, according to Lacan, mathematics is the full form of scientific language:

> There has never been any thought other than symbolic, and scientific thought is the one that reduces symbolism by grounding the subject in it: this is what is called mathematics in everyday language (Lacan. Écrits 2, op. cit., 'From a posteriori Syllabary,' p. 702)

It is clear that there was a not insignificant difference between neoclassical economists and Lacan. While the neoclassicals have no idea about dialectics and Hegel, Lacan boasts about the application of the former and his knowledge of the latter's work. It is therefore appropriate to link Lacan's use of arithmetic as a full expression of the "dialectic of desire" with Hegel's conclusion—including the idealist inversion—about the scope of arithmetic when it comes to understanding concrete determinations. According to Lacan:

> It is the mere indication of that enjoyment in its infinitude that implies the mark of its prohibition, and, by constituting that mark, it implies a sacrifice: the one it covers in a single and same act with the choice of its symbol: the phallus. This choice is allowed by the fact that the phallus, that is, the image of the penis, is negativity in its place in the mirror image. This is what predestines

> the phallus to give body to enjoyment in the dialectic of desire. ...Thus the erectile organ comes to symbolize the site of enjoyment, not as such, nor even as an image, but as the missing part of the desired image: therefore it is comparable to the meaning produced above, of the enjoyment it restores via the coefficient of its statement to the function of the lack of a signifier: (-1) (ibid, p. 802)

According to Hegel:

> It is well known that Pythagoras presented rational relationships or philosophical ideas in numbers; even in modern times they have been used, along with the forms of their relationships, such as powers, etc., in philosophy in order to organize thoughts according to all this or to express them through this medium.
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> …We saw number as the absolute determination of quantity and its element as difference converted into indifference [...] Arithmetic is an analytical science, because all the connections and differences that appear in its object are not in the object itself, but are superimposed on it in a completely external manner... It not only does not contain the concept and with it the task for conceptual thinking, but is the opposite of it. Due to the indifference of what is connected with respect to the connection, which lacks necessity, thinking here is found [...] in the violent activity of moving in the absence of thought and of linking what is incapable of any necessity. The object is the abstract thought of exteriority itself.
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> …The effort consists especially in the following: to firmly hold what lacks cọncept and to combine it in a way that lacks concept. The content is the empty one; [...] The effect—when those exercises are turned into the main point and the primary occupation—can be nothing other than to empty the spirit of form and content and make it dull (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Science of Logic, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Solar, 1976, pp. 187-191).